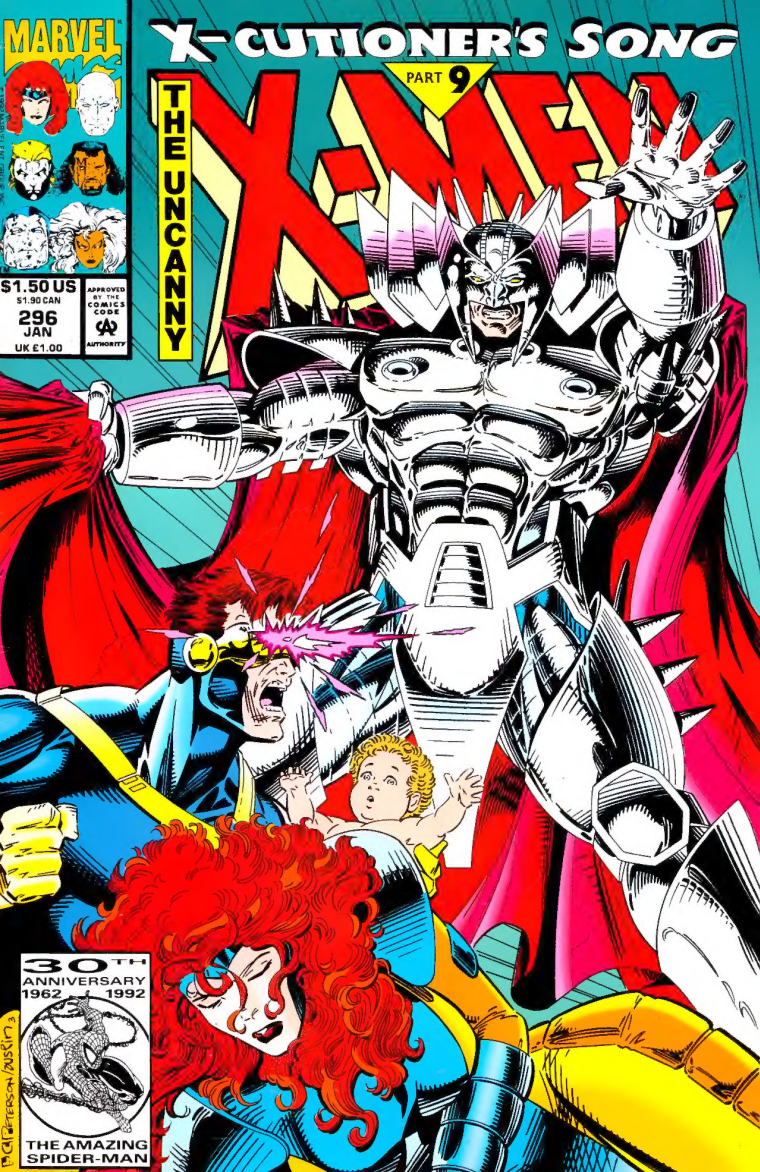
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X-CUTIONER'S SONG
PART 9
THE UNCANNY
X-MEN
30TH ANNIVERSARY
1962 1992
THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN

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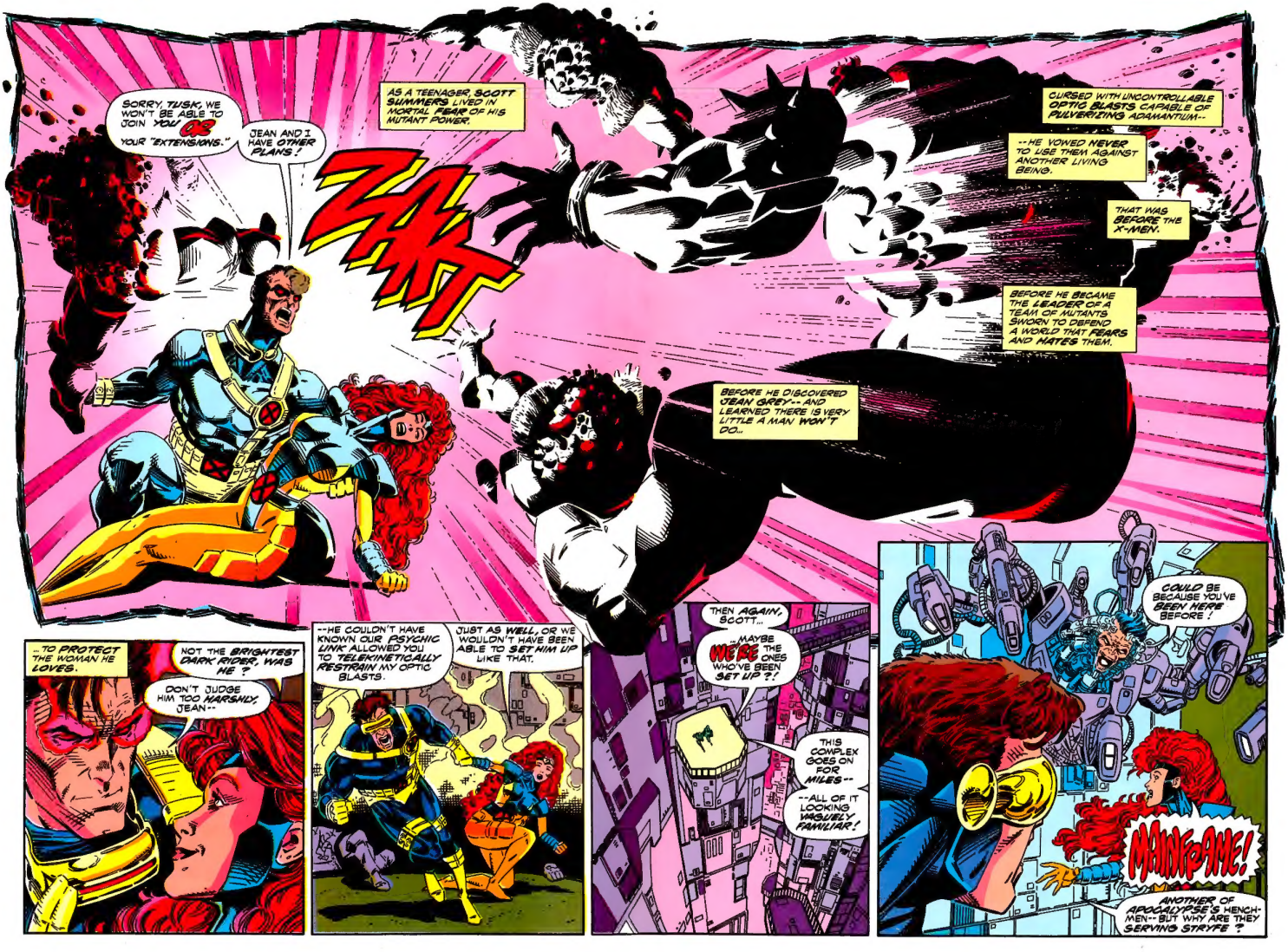
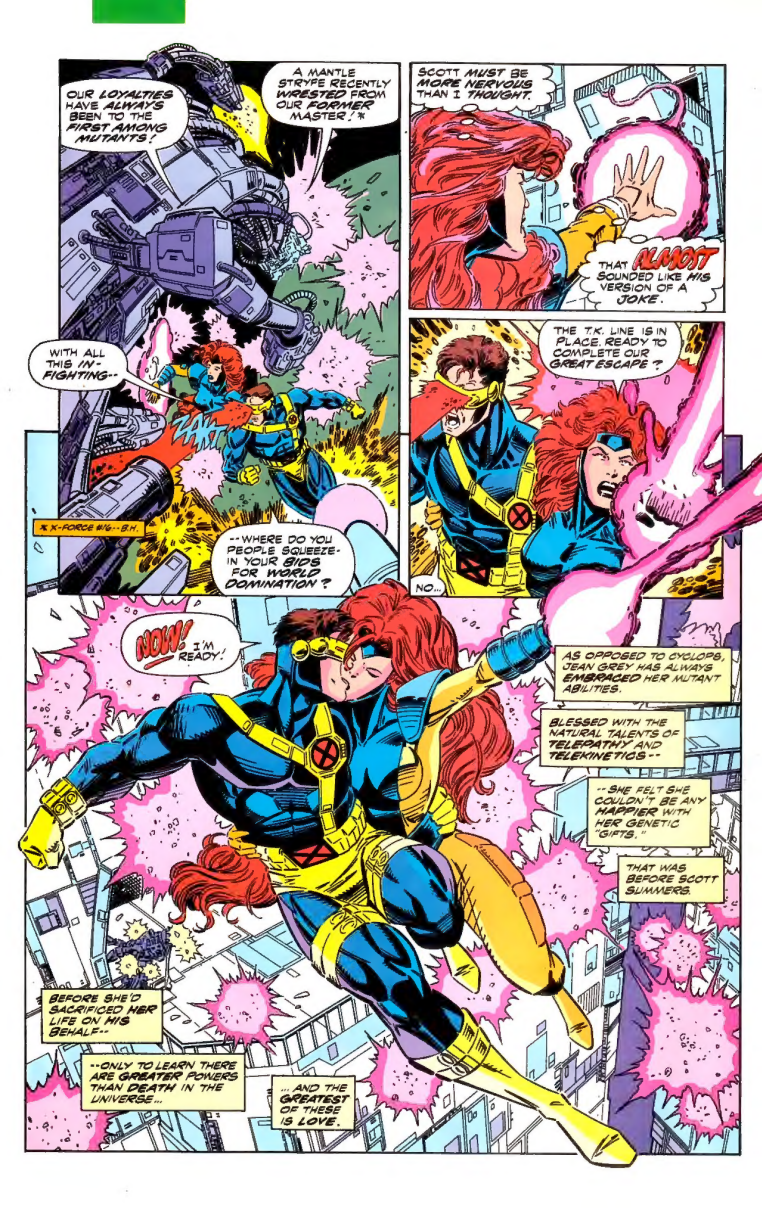
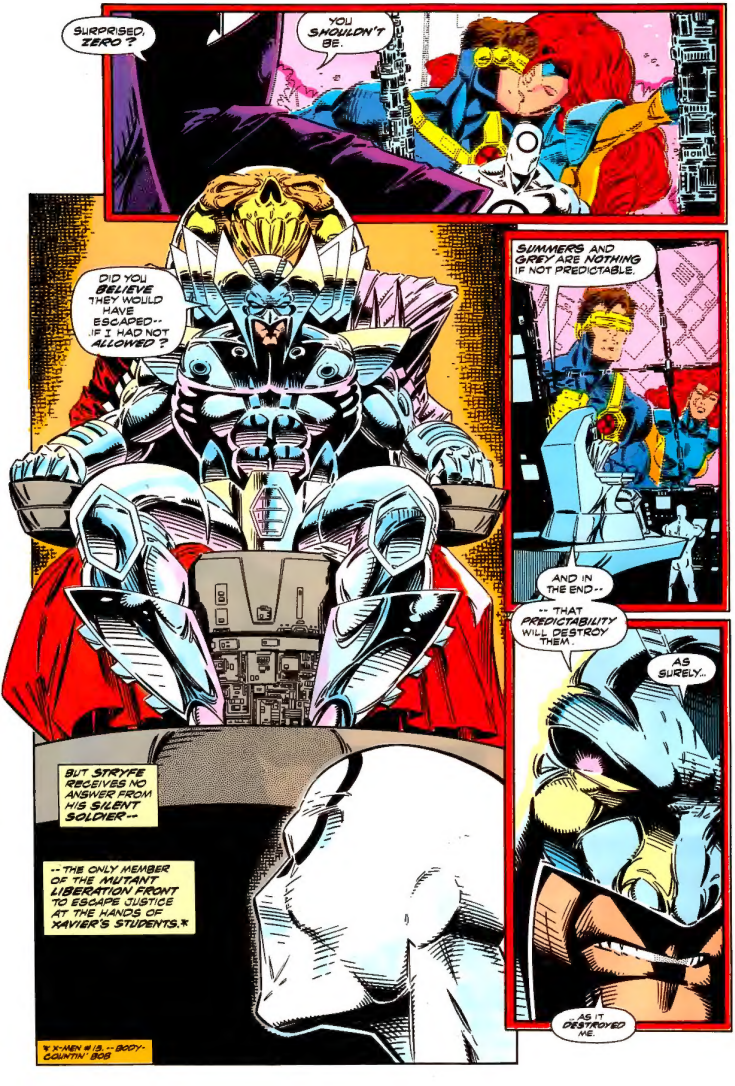
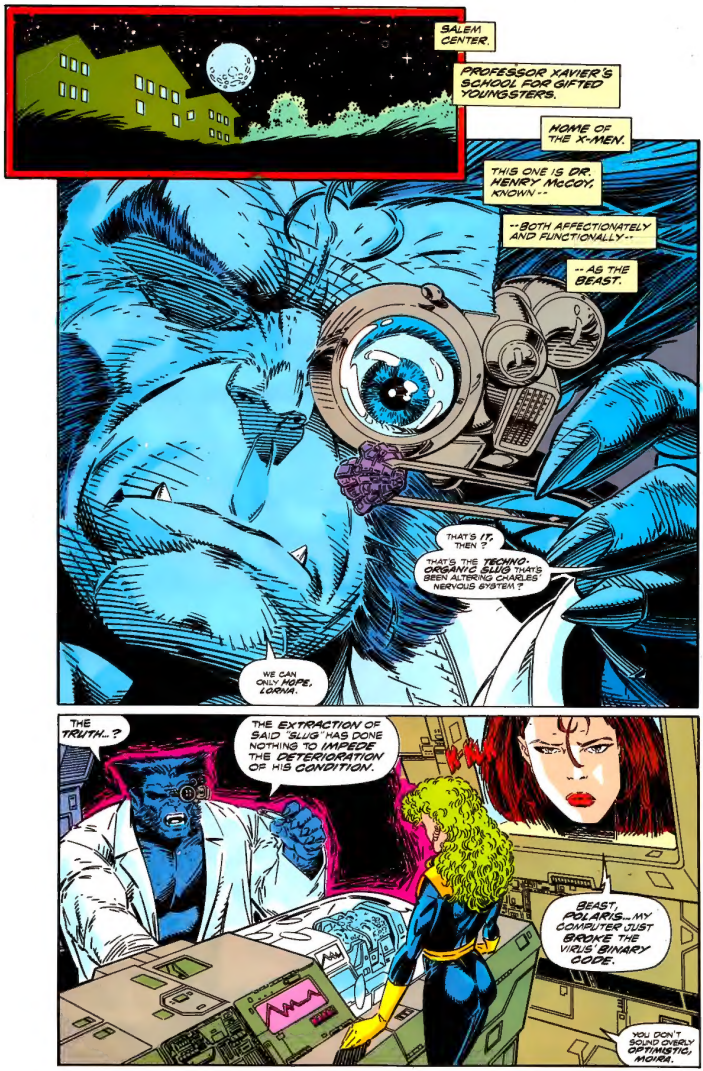
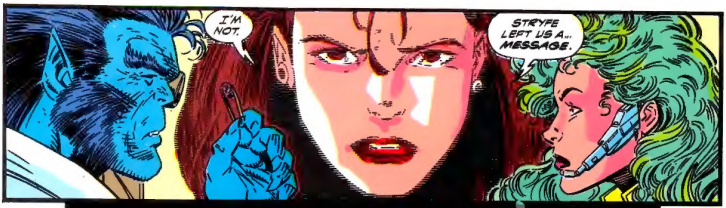

SORRY, TUSK, WE WON'T BE ABLE TO JOIN YOU OR YOUR "EXTENSIONS."
JEAN AND I HAVE OTHER PLANS!
ZHKT
AS A TEENAGER, SCOTT SUMMERS LIVED IN MORTAL FEAR OF HIS MUTANT POWER.
CURSED WITH UNCONTROLLABLE OPTIC BLASTS CAPABLE OF PULVERIZING ADAMANTIUM--
--HE VOWED NEVER TO USE THEM AGAINST ANOTHER LIVING BEING.
THAT WAS BEFORE THE X-MEN.
BEFORE HE BECAME THE LEADER OF A TEAM OF MUTANTS SWORN TO DEFEND A WORLD THAT FEARS AND HATES THEM.
BEFORE HE DISCOVERED JEAN GREY--AND LEARNED THERE IS VERY LITTLE A MAN WON'T DO...
--TO PROTECT THE WOMAN HE LOVES.
NOT THE BRIGHTEST DARK RIDER, WAS HE?
DON'T JUDGE HIM TOO HARSHLY, JEAN--
--HE COULDN'T HAVE KNOWN OUR PSYCHIC LINK ALLOWED YOU TO TELEKINETICALLY RESTRAIN MY OPTIC BLASTS.
JUST AS WELL, OR WE WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SET HIM UP LIKE THAT.
THEN AGAIN, SCOTT...
...MAYBE WE'RE THE ONES WHO'VE BEEN SET UP?!
THIS COMPLEX GOES ON FOR MILES--
--ALL OF IT LOOKING VAGUELY FAMILIAR!
COULD BE BECAUSE YOU'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE!
MAINFRAME!
ANOTHER OF APOCALYPSE'S HENCHMEN--BUT WHY ARE THEY SERVING STRYFE?


OUR LOYALTIES HAVE ALWAYS BEEN TO THE FIRST AMONG MUTANTS!
A MANTLE STRYFE RECENTLY WRESTED FROM OUR FORMER MASTER!*
WITH ALL THIS IN-FIGHTING--
* X-FORCE #16--B.H.
--WHERE DO YOU PEOPLE SQUEEZE IN YOUR BIDS FOR WORLD DOMINATION?
SCOTT MUST BE MORE NERVOUS THAN I THOUGHT.
THAT ALMOST SOUNDED LIKE HIS VERSION OF A JOKE.
THE T.K. LINE IS IN PLACE. READY TO COMPLETE OUR GREAT ESCAPE?
NO...
NOW! I'M READY!
AS OPPOSED TO CYCLOPS, JEAN GREY HAS ALWAYS EMBRACED HER MUTANT ABILITIES.
BLESSED WITH THE NATURAL TALENTS OF TELEPATHY AND TELEKINETICS--
--SHE FELT SHE COULDN'T BE ANY HAPPIER WITH HER GENETIC "GIFTS."
THAT WAS BEFORE SCOTT SUMMERS.
BEFORE SHE'D SACRIFICED HER LIFE ON HIS BEHALF--
--ONLY TO LEARN THERE ARE GREATER POWERS THAN DEATH IN THE UNIVERSE...
... AND THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE.


SURPRISED, ZERO ?
YOU SHOULDN'T BE.
DID YOU BELIEVE THEY WOULD HAVE ESCAPED-- IF I HAD NOT ALLOWED ?
SUMMERS AND GREY ARE NOTHING IF NOT PREDICTABLE.
AND IN THE END--
-- THAT PREDICTABILITY WILL DESTROY THEM.
AS SURELY...
...AS IT DESTROYED ME.
BUT STRYFE RECEIVES NO ANSWER FROM HIS SILENT SOLDIER--
-- THE ONLY MEMBER OF THE MUTANT LIBERATION FRONT TO ESCAPE JUSTICE AT THE HANDS OF XAVIER'S STUDENTS.*
* X-MEN # 18. -- BODY-COUNTIN' BOB

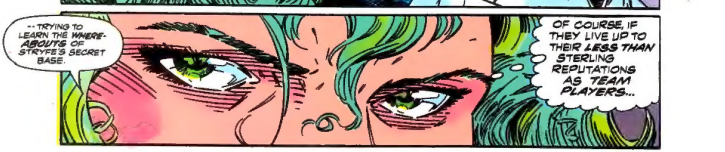

SALEM CENTER.
PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS.
HOME OF THE X-MEN.
THIS ONE IS DR. HENRY McCOY, KNOWN --
--BOTH AFFECTIONATELY AND FUNCTIONALLY--
-- AS THE BEAST.
THAT'S IT, THEN ?
THAT'S THE TECHNO-ORGANIC SLUG THAT'S BEEN ALTERING CHARLES' NERVOUS SYSTEM ?
WE CAN ONLY HOPE, LORNA.
THE TRUTH...?
THE EXTRACTION OF SAID "SLUG" HAS DONE NOTHING TO IMPEDE THE DETERIORATION OF HIS CONDITION.
BEAST, POLARIS... MY COMPUTER JUST BROKE THE VIRUS BINARY CODE.
YOU DON'T SOUND OVERLY OPTIMISTIC, MOIRA.

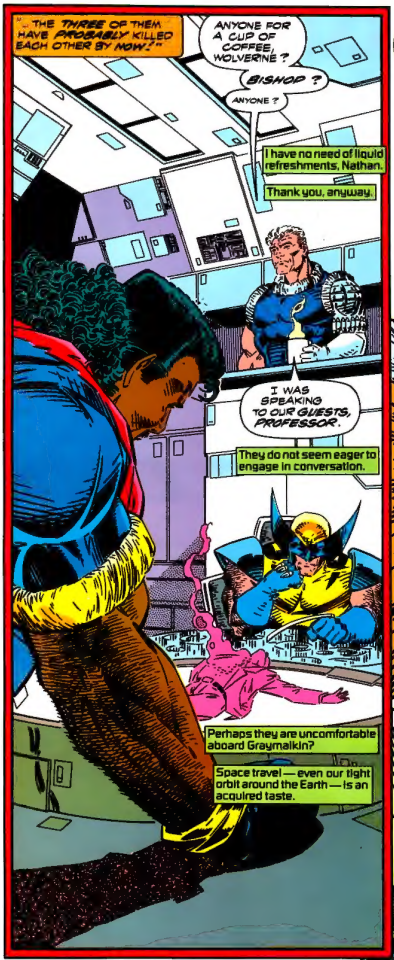

I'M NOT.
STRYFE LEFT US A... MESSAGE.

HERE--
--SEE FOR YOURSELF.

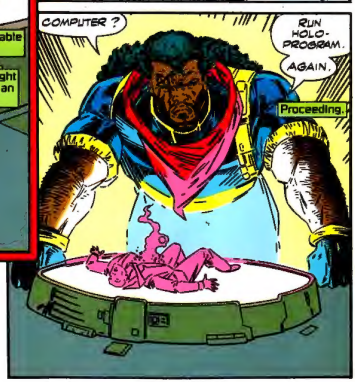
LIKE A CHILD'S TAUNT!

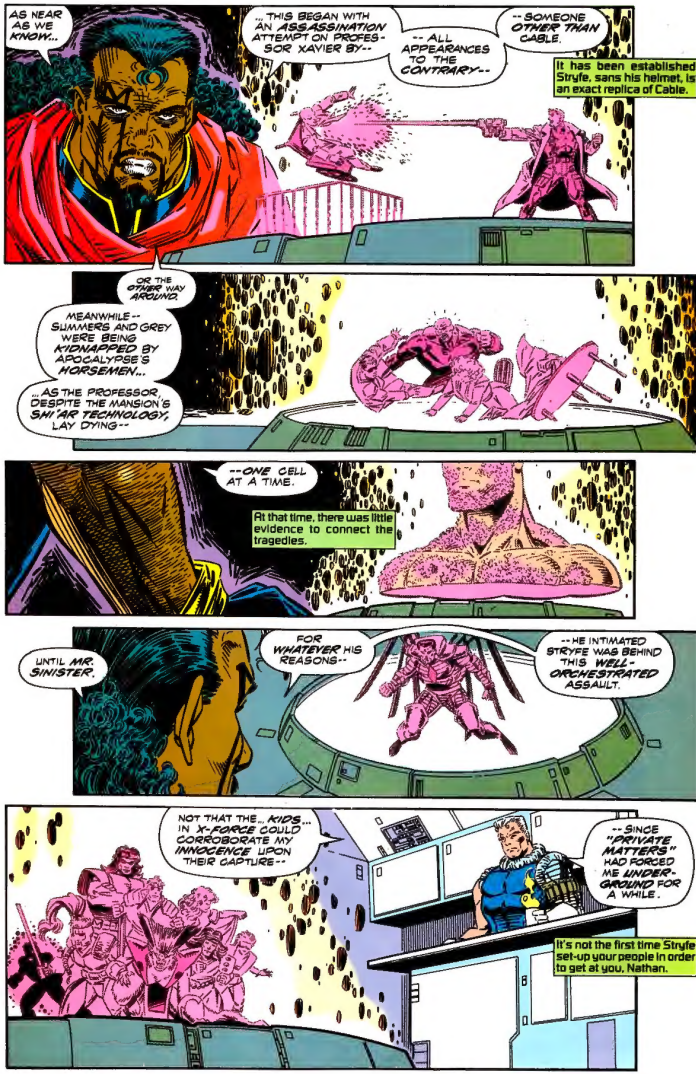
IT'S IMPORTANT THAT YOU DON'T GIVE UP HOPE, HANK.
I EXHAUSTED MY SUPPLY OF HOPE ABOUT TWO O'CLOCK THIS MORNING.
ALL THAT'S LEFT IS ANGER, FRUSTRATION AND AN OVERWHELMING DESIRE TO CRAM 355 lbs. OF BLUE FUR DOWN STRYFE'S THROAT!
YOU MIGHT GET THE SNAKE TO DO JUST THAT, WOLVERINE, BISHOP AND CABLE ARE WORKING TOGETHER--

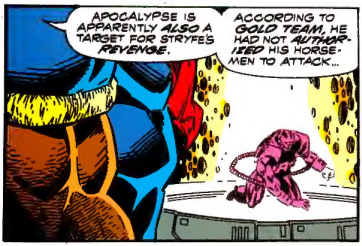

--TRYING TO LEARN THE WHERE-ABOUTS OF STRYFE'S SECRET BASE.
OF COURSE, IF THEY LIVE UP TO THEIR LESS THAN STERLING REPUTATIONS AS TEAM PLAYERS...

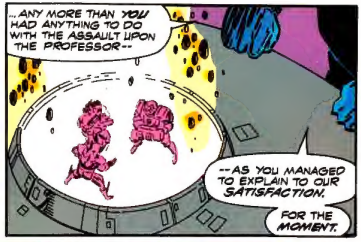

"...THE THREE OF THEM HAVE PROBABLY KILLED EACH OTHER BY NOW!"
ANYONE FOR A CUP OF COFFEE, WOLVERINE?
BISHOP?
ANYONE?
I have no need of liquid refreshments, Nathan.
Thank you, anyway.
I WAS SPEAKING TO OUR GUESTS, PROFESSOR.
They do not seem eager to engage in conversation.
Perhaps they are uncomfortable aboard Graymalkin?
Space travel — even our tight orbit around the Earth — is an acquired taste.

OR MAYBE THEY'RE JUST CONCENTRATING ON THE TASK AT HAND-- LOCATING STRYFE!
GENTLEMEN, I APPRECIATE THE IMPORTANCE OF A STRATEGY SESSION AS MUCH AS THE NEXT SEASONED WARHORSE...
...BUT RUNNING THROUGH THIS SCENARIO AD INFINITUM IS GETTING US NOWHERE.
YOU'VE BEEN AT THAT FOR HOURS, SON.
WHY DON'T YOU TAKE A BREAK?

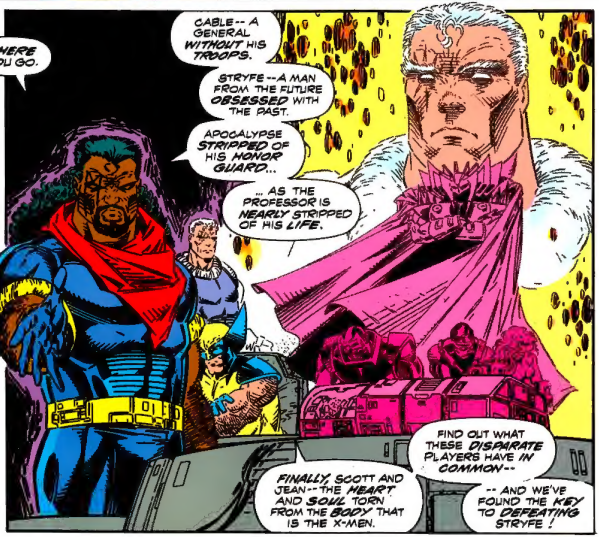

COMPUTER?
RUN HOLO-PROGRAM.
AGAIN.
Proceeding.


AS NEAR AS WE KNOW...
...THIS BEGAN WITH AN ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON PROFESSOR XAVIER BY--
-- ALL APPEARANCES TO THE CONTRARY--
-- SOMEONE OTHER THAN CABLE.
It has been established Stryfe, sans his helmet, is an exact replica of Cable.
OR THE OTHER WAY AROUND.
MEANWHILE -- SUMMERS AND GREY WERE BEING KIDNAPPED BY APOCALYPSE'S HORSEMEN...
AS THE PROFESSOR, DESPITE THE MANSION'S SHI'AR TECHNOLOGY, LAY DYING--
--ONE CELL AT A TIME.
At that time, there was little evidence to connect the tragedies.
UNTIL MR. SINISTER.
FOR WHATEVER HIS REASONS--
--HE INTIMATED STRYFE WAS BEHIND THIS WELL-ORCHESTRATED ASSAULT.
NOT THAT THE... KIDS... IN X-FORCE COULD CORROBORATE MY INNOCENCE UPON THEIR CAPTURE--
-- SINCE "PRIVATE MATTERS" HAD FORCED ME UNDERGROUND FOR A WHILE.
It's not the first time Stryfe set-up your people in order to get at you, Nathan.





Perhaps a display of the key elements to date?



SCOTT, MAYBE NOW ISN'T THE TIME TO QUESTION THE MOTIVES OF OUR CAPTOR--

--BUT I CAN'T HELP WONDERING...

--WHY US?

NEAR AS I CAN TELL--

--THIS "STRYFE" BLAMES YOU AND ME..

FOR SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED IN HIS PAST.

A SINGLE EVENT WHICH CHANGED HIS LIFE

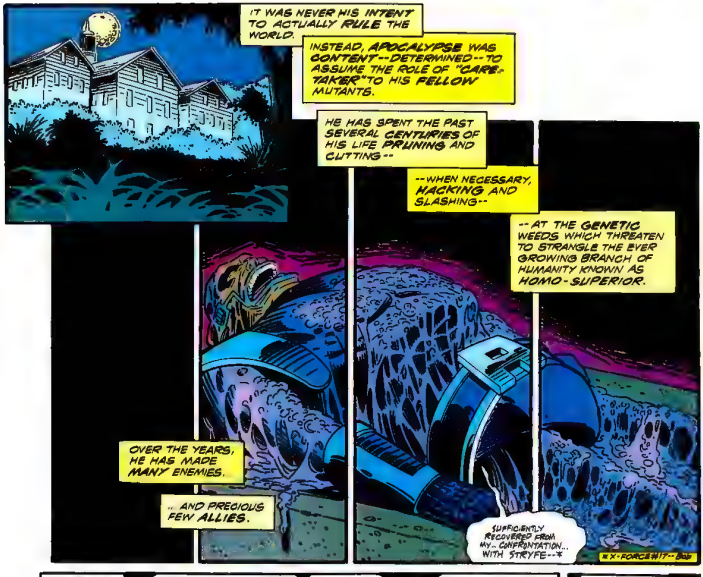
BUT HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE? HE'S GOT TO BE TWENTY YEARS OLDER THAN US.

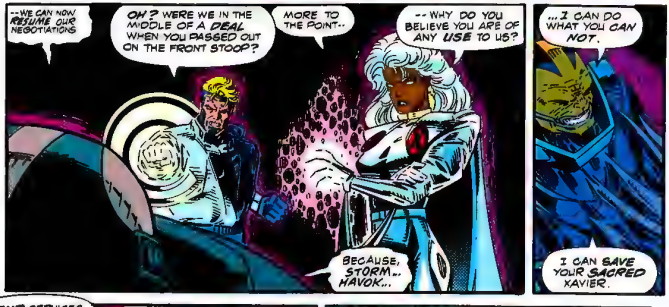
WE'LL PONDER THE SPECIFICS LATER--

--AFTER WE'VE ESCAPED AND ALERTED THE REST OF THE X-MEN TO..

--TO THE

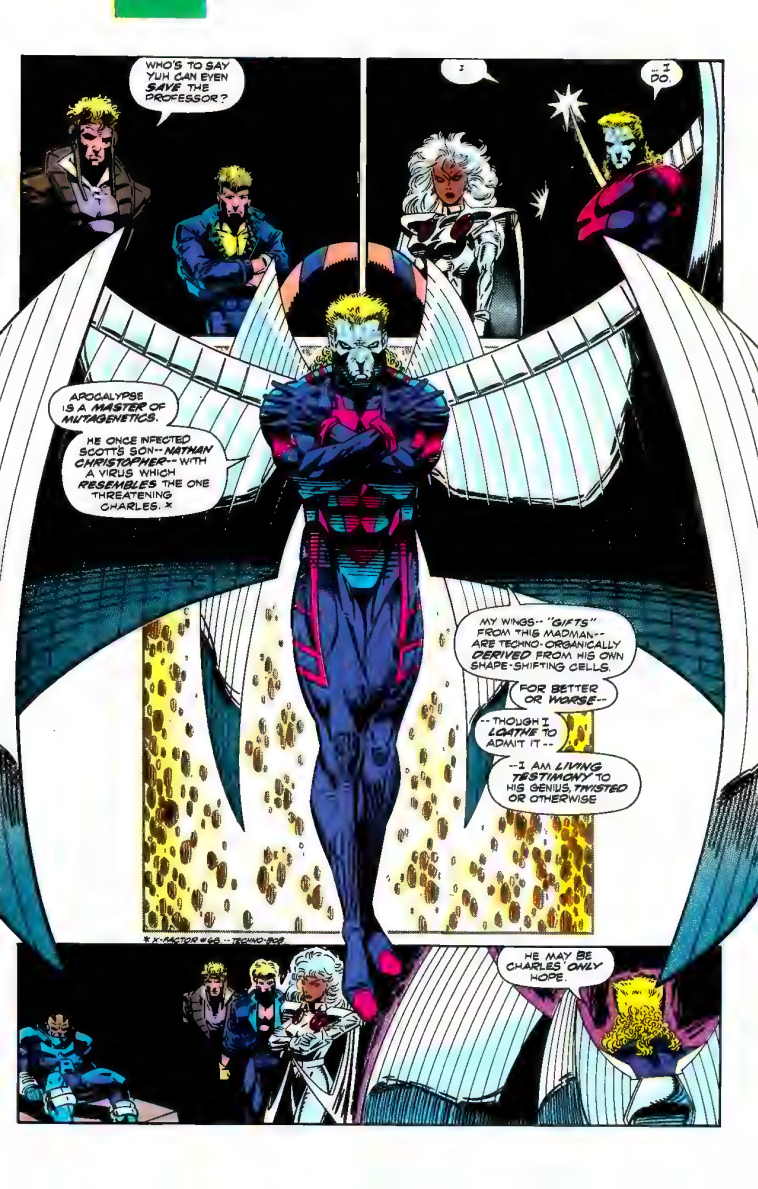
--TO THE BABY?


IT WAS NEVER HIS INTENT TO ACTUALLY RULE THE WORLD.
INSTEAD, APOCALYPSE WAS CONTENT--DETERMINED--TO ASSUME THE ROLE OF "CARE-TAKER" TO HIS FELLOW MUTANTS.
HE HAS SPENT THE PAST SEVERAL CENTURIES OF HIS LIFE PRUNING AND CUTTING--
--WHEN NECESSARY, HACKING AND SLASHING--
--AT THE GENETIC WEEDS WHICH THREATEN TO STRANGLE THE EVER GROWING BRANCH OF HUMANITY KNOWN AS HOMO-SUPERIOR.
OVER THE YEARS, HE HAS MADE MANY ENEMIES.
... AND PRECIOUS FEW ALLIES.
SUFFICIENTLY RECOVERED FROM MY CONFRONTATION WITH STRYFE--*
*X-FORCE #17--


--WE CAN NOW RESUME OUR NEGOTIATIONS.
OH? WERE WE IN THE MIDDLE OF A DEAL WHEN YOU PASSED OUT ON THE FRONT STOOP?
MORE TO THE POINT--
--WHY DO YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE OF ANY USE TO US?
BECAUSE, STORM... HAVOK...
...I CAN DO WHAT YOU CAN NOT.
I CAN SAVE YOUR SACRED XAVIER.

YOUR SERVICES IN EXCHANGE FOR OURS, AS YOU HAVE SAID.
BUT, IN THE GODDESS' NAME--
--WHY SHOULD WE TRUST YOU?

HALF YOUR NUMBER ARE IMPRISONED--
--OR HAVE FALLEN IN BATTLE.
FRANKLY, CHILD--YOU HAVE NO CHOICE.


WHO'S TO SAY YUH CAN EVEN SAVE THE PROFESSOR?
I
-- I DO.
APOCALYPSE IS A MASTER OF MUTAGENETICS.
HE ONCE INFECTED SCOTT'S SON-- NATHAN CHRISTOPHER-- WITH A VIRUS WHICH RESEMBLES THE ONE THREATENING CHARLES. *
MY WINGS-- "GIFTS" FROM THIS MADMAN-- ARE TECHNO-ORGANICALLY DERIVED FROM HIS OWN SHAPE-SHIFTING CELLS.
FOR BETTER OR WORSE--
-- THOUGH I LOATHE TO ADMIT IT --
--I AM LIVING TESTIMONY TO HIS GENIUS, TWISTED OR OTHERWISE
* X-FACTOR #68 -- TECHNO-BOB
HE MAY BE CHARLES' ONLY HOPE.

IF WARREN BELIEVES HIM--
-- THERE IS NOTHING LEFT TO DISCUSS.
BRING HIM.
I AM CURIOUS.
YOU HAVE NEVER MADE A SECRET OF YOUR HATRED FOR ME.
GIVEN THIS OPPORTUNITY-- WHY DON'T YOU ACQUIESCE TO YOUR HEART'S DESIRE?
WHY NOT SLAY ME, SON?
I AM NO MORE YOUR "SON" THAN I AM THE "ANGEL OF DEATH" YOU SOUGHT TO TURN ME INTO.
WHEN I DO KILL YOU--
--AND REST ASSURED I WILL--
--IT WILL ONLY BE AFTER YOU'VE SUFFERED THE WAY I'VE SUFFERED BECAUSE OF YOU.
IT WILL BE AT A TIME AND PLACE OF MY CHOOSING--
--NOT SIMPLY BECAUSE THE SITUATION HAS PRESENTED ITSELF.

AS A CHILD, THE ONLY WAY TO AVOID A NIMROD WAS BY HIDING AMONG THE NORMS.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MUTANTS AND--PARDON THE TERM--"FLATSCANS" WERE... STRAINED AT BEST

A HUMAN HOME WAS THE LAST PLACE A SENTINEL WOULD LOOK.

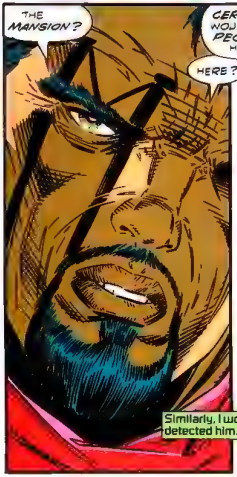
NOT THAT REMINISCING OVER MEMORIES WHICH HAVE YET TO BE ISN'T FASCINATING.

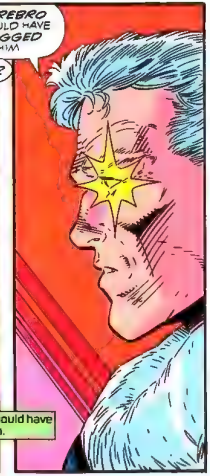
..BUT HOW IN THE ANCIENT FUTURE IS THIS GOING TO HELP US FIND STRYFE?

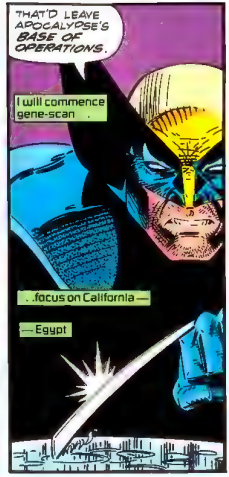
THE KID IS SAYIN'--

--AND I'M INCLINED T'AGREE WITH HIM--

--IS YER MIRROR IMAGE IS PROBABLY HIDIN' IN PLAIN SIGHT... AMONG HIS ENEMIES







OH, LORD..

... THAT CHILD--LOOKS SO MUCH LIKE.. LIKE..

...NATMAN ?

BUT WHEN ASKANI TOOK MY SON TO THE FUTURE TO SAVE HIS LIFE--*

--SHE SAID IT WAS FOREVER. SHE SAID I'D NEVER SEE HIM AGAIN.

SCOTT, I'M SORRY.. I DON'T NEED MY PSYCHIC POWERS TO KNOW HOW DIFFICULT THIS IS FOR YOU. IT'S HARD FOR ME, TOO.

IT'S AS IF STRYFE KNEW WE PLAYED OUT A SIMILAR SCENARIO NOT THAT LONG AGO.

BUT, AGAIN..

... HOW COULD HE KNOW ?

YES. HOW WOULD HE UNLESS--

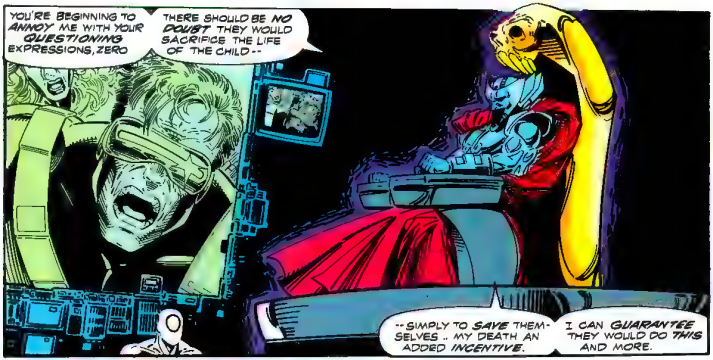
--HE WAS THERE?

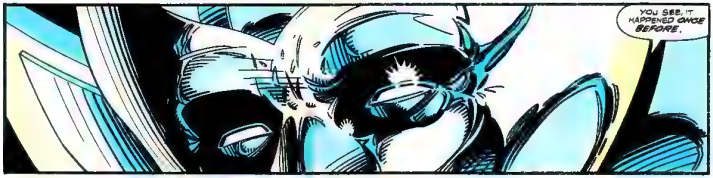
DON'T GET CARELESS, JEAN. HOW DO WE KNOW IT'S NOT AN AUTOMATON--A TRAP? STRYFE DOESN'T SEEM ABOVE THAT.

I CAN SENSE A THOUGHT PATTERN, SCOTT

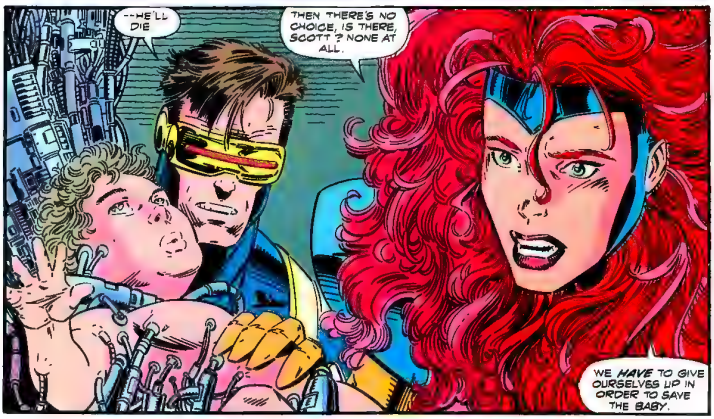
HE'S ALIVE.

ALAS, A STATE OF BEING HE WILL NOT ENJOY FOR MUCH LONGER!
THIS CHILD'S MIND HAS BEEN GENETICALLY LINKED WITH MY OWN CONSCIOUSNESS--
--SIMILARLY, HIS BODY IS INTERWOVEN WITH THE LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEM OF THIS ENTIRE COMPLEX!
YOU'RE SAYING WE'RE POWERLESS TO STOP YOU WITHOUT HURTING THE BOY? YOU SON OF--
HOW COULD YOU? HIDING BEHIND THE LIFE OF AN INFANT, STRYFE?
YOU'RE INSANE!
DO YOU HONESTLY BELIEVE WE VALUE OUR OWN LIVES--
--OVER THAT OF AN INNOCENT CHILD?
NO NEED TO MAKE A DECISION RIGHT AWAY.
YOU HAVE THIRTY SECONDS.
YOU MISUNDERSTAND. I HIDE BEHIND NOTHING. RATHER I INVITE.
YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO RID THE WORLD OF THE DARK RIDERS.
...THIS APOCALYPTIC TOWER OF PAIN AND MISERY...
...AND
--SIMPLY BY DESTROYING THE CHILD


YOU'RE BEGINNING TO ANNOY ME WITH YOUR QUESTIONING EXPRESSIONS, ZERO
THERE SHOULD BE NO DOUBT THEY WOULD SACRIFICE THE LIFE OF THE CHILD--
--SIMPLY TO SAVE THEMSELVES .. MY DEATH AN ADDED INCENTIVE.
I CAN GUARANTEE THEY WOULD DO THIS AND MORE.


YOU SEE, IT HAPPENED ONCE BEFORE.

ANYTHING ?
IF I WAS HANK OR FORGE--
--OR HAD A MONTH TO FIGURE THIS OUT--
--I'D FIND A WAY TO FREE THE BABY FROM THIS CIRCUITRY WITHOUT HURTING HIM
I'M AFRAID IF WE ATTEMPT TO REMOVE HIM NOW--


--HE'LL DIE
THEN THERE'S NO CHOICE, IS THERE, SCOTT ? NONE AT ALL.
WE HAVE TO GIVE OURSELVES UP IN ORDER TO SAVE THE BABY.

AR-AKGH!
TZZZNT!
NOT AN OPTION.
YOU HAVE TO DESTROY ME!
DESTROY THE DARK RIDERS!
YOU EVEN HAVE TIME TO FLEE THE COMPLEX BEFORE IT EXPLODES!
SURRENDER IS NOT ONE OF YOUR CHOICES!
KILL THE CHILD... KILL US...
...BEFORE WE KILL YOU!

BULLPEN BULLETINS

MARVEL COMICS

STAN'S SOAPBOX

Hi, Heroes!

What good's a Soapbox if it isn't used to tell you things you didn't know? I'll bet few of you were aware that mighty Marvel's sensational sister company across the sea, Marvel Comics U.K. (U.K. standing for United Kingdom, of course) has taken the once-staid British populace by storm with the creation of a pulse-pounding plethora of startling new super heroes, featured in England's own cosmic collection of costumed crusaders — the now-legendary best-seller — OVERKILL!

But, since few True Believers are able to fly to England each fortnight to pick up the latest editions, your big-hearted Bullpen has solved the problem for you! We've arranged to ship most of Marvel U.K.'s titanic new titles to your favorite comicbook stores in America! No longer shall we underprivileged colonials be deprived of the mother country's harvest of heroes! And what a caravansary of cataclysmic characters they are! Just the briefest listing of their titles should give you an inkling of the wonderment in store ...

Zooming to the U.S. at the end of '92 you'll meet DEATH'S HEAD II, MOTOR-MOUTH & KILLPOWER, THE KNIGHTS OF PENDRAGON, DIGITEK, BATTLE-TIDE (the senses-staggering battle between Death's Head II and Killpower), WARHEADS, DARK ANGEL, TEAM HELIX, and NIGHTRAVEN!

But that's only the beginning of Britain's super hero invasion! Early in '93 don't miss the way-out wonderment of MYSTECH WARS, DEATH RATTLE, SHADOW RIDERS, BLOOD SEED, GENE MACHINE, WILD THING, BLACK-AXE, SUPER SOLDIERS, GUN RUNNER, DEATH METAL, and the mind-blasting mystery of — PLASMER!

Perhaps the most spectacular surprise of all is the fact that the entire kaboodle of British heroes meet, greet, and interact with your own favorites from Marvel U.S.A.! So don't be surprised to see Wolverine and Sabretooth pop up in Battletide's limited-series, or to find Warheads, Mephisto and the Silver Surfer sharing the same adventures! As always, the Marvel Universe is one and inseparable, so anything happening anywhere affects all else in our ever-constant, ever-changing cosmos!

'Tis with happy heart and cheerful mien that I bid thee adieu, buoyed by the knowledge that the incalculable power of this month's Soapbox has insured that thou shalt not miss the triumphant entry of Marvel U.K.'s horde of heroes to our grand and grateful shores!

Excelsior!

Stan

Stan Lee

Everybody's doin' it! No, we're not talking about hologram covers — we're talking about gettin' hitched. Takin' the plunge. Checkin' into the matrimonial institution. Doin' the marriage thing.

Lately there have been a rash of weddings among the editorial staff of Mighty Marvel — they've been popping up like zits on a New Warrior. Following in the footsteps of Reed and Sue ... Peter and Mary Jane .. Dr. Octopus and Aunt May .. many of our mighty Marveloids have decided to pursue lives of wedded bliss. Tieing the knot is a big commitment — it's like when Hercules quits his job as a solo hero and becomes an Avenger.

One editor who is solo no longer is Associate Editor **Evan Skolnick**, who this past July said "I do" to his own British import, **Lynn White**, after a whirlwind three month courtship. In addition to his recent nuptials, Evan was recently promoted to Associate Editor of such titles of ORIGINAL GHOST RIDER and MARVEL YEAR IN REVIEW. Sounds like he'll have quite a year of his own to review.

Evan's former boss, **Fabian Nicieza**, writer of NOMAD, last month gave up his life of wandering as he settled down and married his longtime sweetheart, **Tracey Lee**. It only took *twelve years* for Fabe to make that decision — that's one heck of a deadline! Fabe's brother, **Mariano**, of the Promotions Department, threw a blowout bachelor party for fabulous Fabe, which featured a special mega-entertaining slideshow of "The Lives and Time of Fabian." It was attended by many of the brightest and best guys (no girls allowed, natch) in the business.

Fabian's NOMAD editor **Glenn** "Helium" **Herdling** seems to have found religion. Not only is he writing PARAGON for our new religious comics line, but he also was made an honest man last month by his new bride, **Laura Eckhardt**. Glenn took his lady love up in a balloon, and popped the question — but not the balloon, fortunately. Glenn's proposal first appeared in comic book form in WHAT IF #31. Glenn presented Laura with a copy of the comic while up in the balloon, and she answered in the affirmative quicker than Tom DeFalco approving a new Thor series.

Still waiting for approval for that Quasar/Ren & Stimpy team-up is **Mark Gruenwald**, who also slipped the quantum band around the finger of his new bride, **Catherine Schuller**, last month. Performing at Mark's wedding was WOLVERINE writer **Larry Hama**'s band, the K-Otics! Mark and Catherine's wedding song was "One More Kiss," from the movie *Bladerunner*! (Now if only we could make a *replicant* of Mark, we could get twice as much work out of him!)

Bullpen cartoonist **Rick Parker**, still basking in the success of his best-selling book with **Barry Dutter**, *Everything I Really Need to Know I learned From Television*, also walked down the aisle last month with BARBIE writer **Lisa Trusiani** at a ceremony in Falmouth, Maine. The reception included a good old New England style clambake, and all the guests were treated to a cruise on lovely Casco Bay. Unfortunately, the Love Boat's Captain Stubing was unavailable to perform the wedding ceremony.

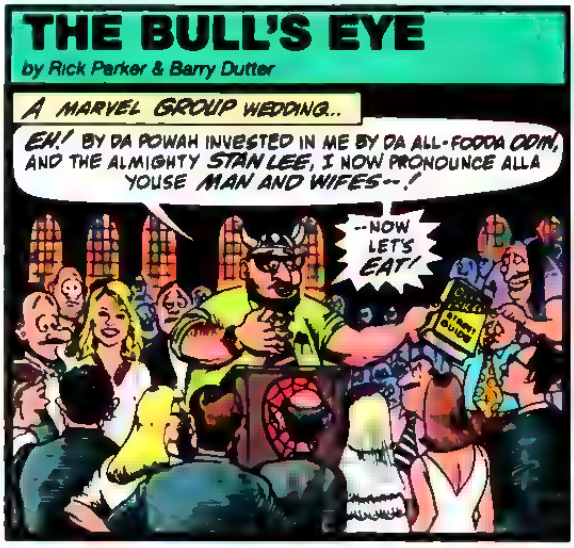
Sadly, Pin-Head of the Cenobites, doesn't do weddings, either. Pin-Head's boss, HELLRAISER editor **Marcus McLaurin**, is used to seeing souls torn apart over in the pages of that mag. But MM will take part in the joining of two souls when he exchanges vows with his intended, **Janet Paes**, next May. Marcus proposed to Janet on the Sky Ride at Disneyworld last January. Surely this wedding will be an Epic event, though hopefully not a harrowing one. (Or are we Barkering up the wrong tree?)

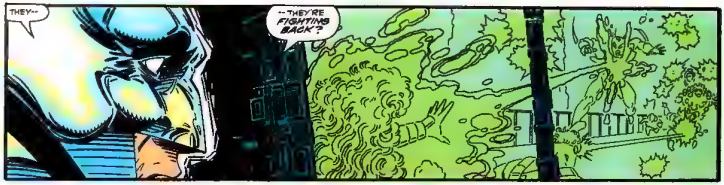
Finally, we come to HULK editor **Bobbie Chase**, whose gamma-irradiated nuptials will be taking place next June. **Craig Kunaschk**, of the Direct Sales Department, proposed to Bobbie at the top of a mountain in St.Maartin while the two were on vacation. It is hoped that their union will bring Marvel's editorial and sales departments closer together, and bring even greater unity to the Marvel family. Surely it won't be long before Bobbie and Craig will have little Midnight Sons and Daughters of their own running around all over the place.

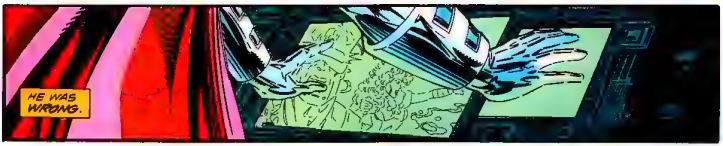
Warmest wedding wishes to all our newlyweds! And remember the lesson learned by Spider-Man not so long ago: With great weddings come great catering bills!

THE BULL'S EYE

by Rick Parker & Barry Dutter







IT IS NOT A REALIZATION WHICH COMES EASY TO THIS MAN...

...OR, MORE IMPORTANTLY, TO THE CHILD WITHIN HIM.

HE HAS SPENT A LIFE-TIME HATING THEM FOR A MULTITUDE OF SINS.

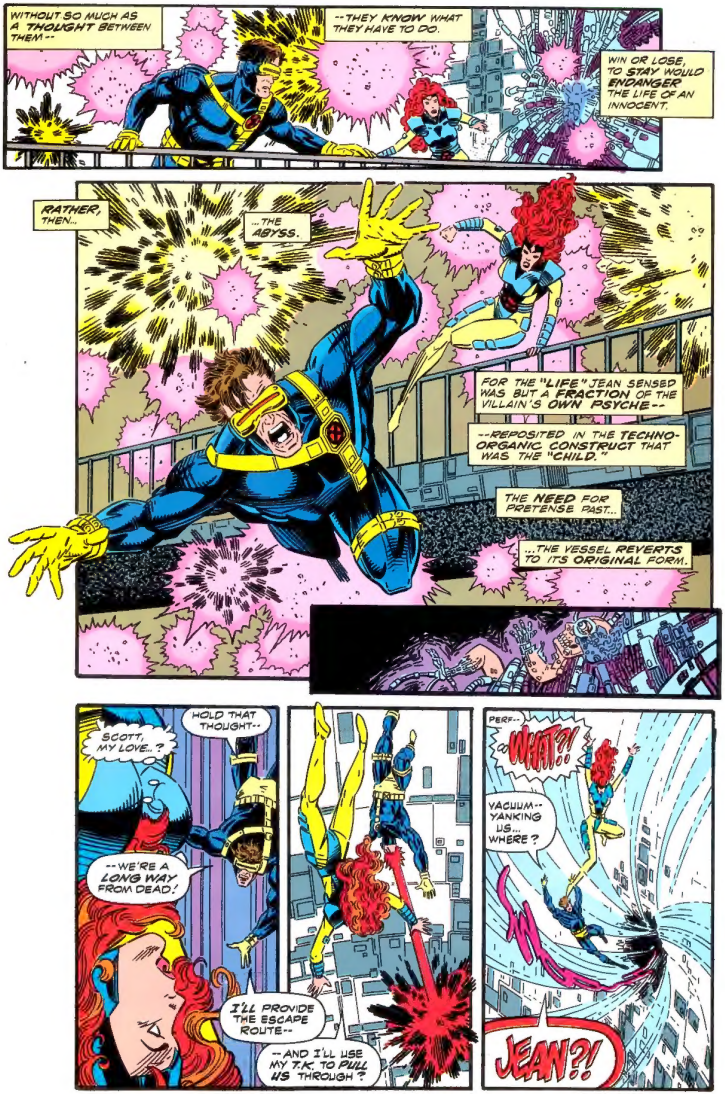
SINS HE CAN NO LONGER BE SURE THEY COMMITTED.

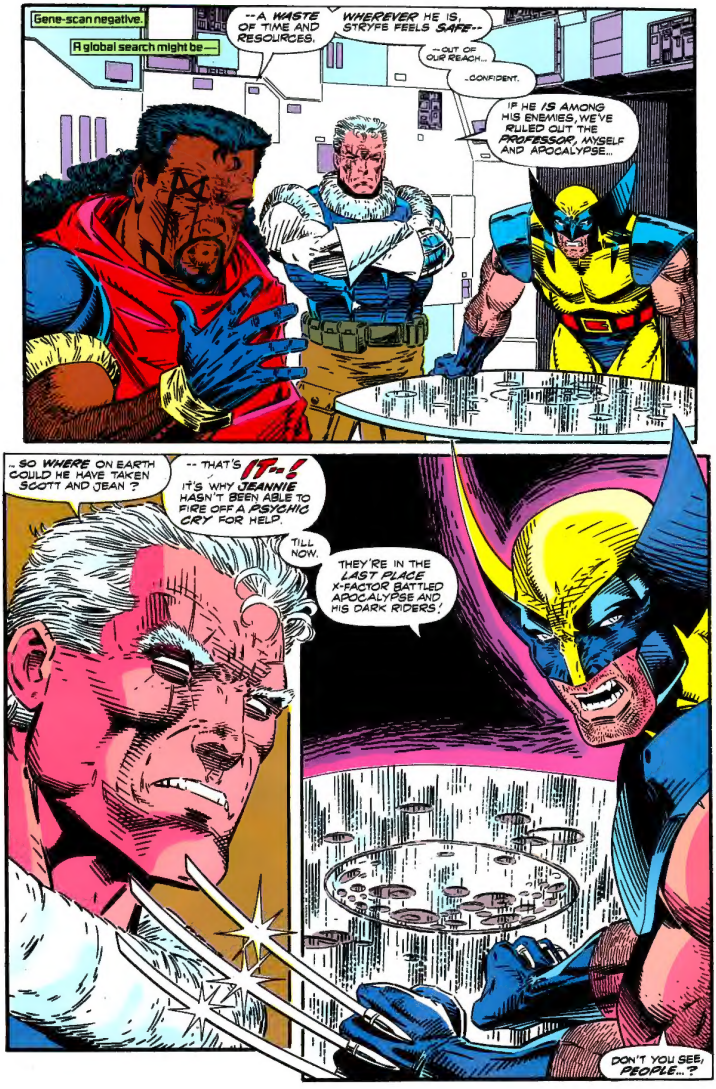
THEIR ACTIONS THIS DAY HAVE PUT A LIE TO HIS MEMORIES.

HIS RESOLVE HAS BEEN REPLACED BY DOUBT...

...WHILE HIS HATRED--

--IS ALL THAT HE HAS LEFT TO CALL HIS OWN...


WITHOUT SO MUCH AS A THOUGHT BETWEEN THEM--
--THEY KNOW WHAT THEY HAVE TO DO.
WIN OR LOSE, TO STAY WOULD ENDANGER THE LIFE OF AN INNOCENT.
RATHER, THEN...
...THE ABYSS.
FOR THE "LIFE" JEAN SENSED WAS BUT A FRACTION OF THE VILLAIN'S OWN PSYCHE--
--REPOSITED IN THE TECHNO-ORGANIC CONSTRUCT THAT WAS THE "CHILD."
THE NEED FOR PRETENSE PAST...
...THE VESSEL REVERTS TO ITS ORIGINAL FORM.
SCOTT, MY LOVE...?
HOLD THAT THOUGHT--
--WE'RE A LONG WAY FROM DEAD!
I'LL PROVIDE THE ESCAPE ROUTE--
--AND I'LL USE MY T.K. TO PULL US THROUGH!
PERF--
WHAT?!
VACUUM--YANKING US... WHERE?
JEAN?!


Gene-scan negative.
A global search might be—
--A WASTE OF TIME AND RESOURCES.
WHEREVER HE IS, STRYFE FEELS SAFE--
--OUT OF OUR REACH...
..CONFIDENT.
IF HE IS AMONG HIS ENEMIES, WE'VE RULED OUT THE PROFESSOR, MYSELF AND APOCALYPSE...
SO WHERE ON EARTH COULD HE HAVE TAKEN SCOTT AND JEAN ?
-- THAT'S IT--!
IT'S WHY JEANNIE HASN'T BEEN ABLE TO FIRE OFF A PSYCHIC CRY FOR HELP.
TILL NOW.
THEY'RE IN THE LAST PLACE X-FACTOR BATTLED APOCALYPSE AND HIS DARK RIDERS!
DON'T YOU SEE, PEOPLE...?

"THEY'RE NOT ON THE EARTH AT ALL!"
-- TO BE CONTINUED IN X-FACTOR #86!

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MEGANUBIS

MINUTEMEN SCANS